



For Immediate Release

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OREGON SPORTS AWARDS ANNOUNCES 2017 SHOW DATE; PLAY IT FORWARD HONORS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS AND NONPROFITS COMMITTED TO PROMOTING YOUTH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Fall Season Award Winners and Fund Grantees Announced

Portland, Ore. – Feb. 21, 2017 – The Oregon Sports Awards is proud to announce the Play It Forward Award and Fund recipients for the fall award cycle, sponsored by Nike and Providence Health & Services. Nike and Providence are committed to helping kids be physically active as an integral part of building healthier communities, and are partnering to recognize and award outstanding efforts to get kids moving across Oregon.

Play It Forward Award recipients will be invited to attend the 65th Oregon Sports Awards, where one student-athlete will be selected to receive the Play It Forward \$2,500 scholarship. The Oregon Sports Awards will be held on June 18, 2017 in the Stanford Theater at the Nike World Headquarters in Beaverton, Ore.

Fall 2016 Play It Forward Award Athletes:

Gabrielle Barin, *Treasure Valley Community College, Volleyball & Tennis*

Gabrielle dedicated her summer to volunteering with the Boys & Girls Club of Western Treasure Valley's Triple Play -- a program that uses physical activity to encourage the growth of mind, body, and soul among youth. Through Triple Play she led workouts, coached boxing lessons and taught the importance of fitness and nutrition to teens. Gabrielle's mentorship efforts do not stop short of the court: she continues to build relationships by inviting youth to her games, free of charge when possible, with the goal of inspiring them to chase their own dreams.

Jacinta Vandenberg, *University of Oregon, Women's Basketball*

Jacinta is currently enrolled in University of Oregon graduate school with an interest in child development. She is a regular volunteer at the Eugene Mission, where she interacts with underprivileged youth. Jacinta is not only able to teach children the importance of physical activity on overall health and wellness, but also promotes the higher educational opportunities that sport participation presents for youth.

Riley Howard, Milwaukie High School, Baseball

Riley dedicates time to the Milwaukie Junior Baseball Association by mowing lawns, prepping fields and building mounds, dugouts and practice areas. He also works with younger student athletes to help them improve their hitting and pitching. During the off-season, he volunteers as an activity monitor at the local elementary school gymnasium. The high school senior aims to make baseball an access point for young people to experience competition, learn valuable skills, find an outlet for stress and have fun.

Keldon Littell, Astoria High School, Football

Keldon, a high school senior, volunteers with Astoria Parks and Recreation, The Astoria Armory, and Astoria area youth sports. As a youth football coach, 4th grade basketball coach, and little league baseball coach, Keldon enjoys being able to watch kids grow both mentally and physically--an opportunity he finds incredibly humbling. Upon graduating college, Keldon hopes to return to Astoria to pursue his passion for coaching in his hometown.

Details about the award process can be found at www.oregonsportsawards.com/playitforward

Play It Forward Fund Recipients:

Kúkátónón Children's African Dance Troupe - www.kukatonon.org

Kúkátónón's mission is to inspire confidence, commitment and vitality among the children in the dance troupe, and to broaden awareness of African and African American cultural traditions throughout Oregon. The Portland-area after-school arts learning program is tuition-free and teaches West African dance and drumming in addition to providing creative opportunities for underserved audiences to enhance the understanding of cultural diversity, serve as an educational tool and improving the welfare of the community through the arts.

Elite Sports Academy - www.elitesportsacademy.org

The mission of Elite Sports Academy is to provide every child with the opportunity to become an elite athlete--on and off the court. The primary organizational goals are to provide education critical to a child's development, help children create and maintain healthy and active lifestyles, and provide top-of-the-line sports training to give children in low-income families their best shot at graduating from high school and obtaining collegiate scholarships.

4 Worlds United Soccer Alliance - www.4worldsunited.org

4WU is a Portland-based nonprofit organization that supports low-income and refugee families who have difficulty navigating the logistical and financial difficulties of "pay to play" athletics by providing youth with entry fees to club soccer programs, transportation, ongoing communication about the program and financial aid to help keep kids playing. 4WU strives to enhance the lives of these kids by providing access to experiences that improve skills, build confidence and unite communities through the power of soccer.

About the Play It Forward Award and Scholarship

Today, fewer and fewer kids have the opportunity to benefit from positive youth sport experiences and physical activity. One barrier to getting kids moving more is a lack of engaging and inspiring role models. Nike and Providence Health & Services hope to overcome this challenge by celebrating individuals and nonprofits that are already doing this important work through the Play It Forward Award and Fund.

For the 2016-2017 school year, the Play It Forward Award will recognize high school and college athletes each season (fall, winter, and spring) for the great work they are doing to give back in their communities across Oregon. Students athletes can self-select to be considered for the award or they can be nominated throughout the year by a community member, teacher, coach, or parent. At the end of each season, the selected Play It Forward Athletes will be recognized for their service by Oregon Sports Awards and receive a certificate of accomplishment.

To be eligible for the Play It Forward Award, the student athlete must:

- Be an Oregon high school or college/university student who is a member of a varsity athletic team at their school
- Demonstrate a sustained volunteer commitment with an organization or program that gets kids active through sport or physical activity
- Demonstrates initiative and drive, by going beyond expected school responsibilities
- Be in good academic standing with their school or college/university
- Not have any criminal record or have been investigated for criminal activity

All awardees—12 in total, representing two high school and two colleges each per season—will become eligible for the Play It Forward Athlete of the Year award. One exceptional student will be selected out of the seasonal awardees recognized throughout the 2016-2017 school year. The winner will be revealed at the annual Oregon Sports Awards event on June 18th, 2017 at Nike's World Headquarters and will also receive a scholarship in the amount of \$2,500.

About The Play It Forward Fund

Positive experiences in sport and physical activity are critical to developing healthy kids and building healthy communities. That is why presenting sponsors Nike and Providence Health & Services have also donated a combined \$50,000 to the Play It Forward Fund managed by the Oregon Sports Authority Foundation.

The Play It Forward Fund supports non-profit organizations that are providing access to physical activity and sport opportunities for youth throughout Oregon. This funding will support organizations focusing on elementary and middle school youth.

The goal of this fund is to increase access to sport across the state of Oregon, targeting those with the least opportunity. This fund will give nine \$5,000 grants, three per athletic season (fall, winter and spring), to deserving organizations throughout the 2016-2017 school year. Over the course of the year we will aim for geographic, ethnic and economic diversity for funded organizations.

The first grant cycle opened on September 15, 2016 with grant applications being accepted on a rolling basis until May 30, 2017. Projects can only apply once during this time period, at <http://www.oregonsports.org/foundation/play-it-forward/>

The Grant Selection Committee is comprised of Nike and Providence Health & Services employees, a representative from the Oregon Sports Awards and a representative from the Oregon Sports Authority Foundation.